

Message Text

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41

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DRC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00

XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-20

SWF-02 USSS-00 SY-04 NIC-01 /185 W

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R 072155Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7286

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

KUESVA/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 1977

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD PFOR HO PN CS

SUBJ: LOCAL REACTION TO ALLEGED STANDARD FRUIT PLOT

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2371

1. DURING FORMAL DINNER AT THIS HOME FOR THE AMBASSADORS OF JAPAN AND CHINA ON JUNE 6, GENERAL LOPEZ TWICE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE ALLEGED PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENTS OF PANAMA, COSTA RICA AND HONDURAS. ALSO, THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO HONDURAS TOOK ME ASIDE AND LAUGHINGLY EXPRESSED RELIEF THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN PUT IN THE POSITION OF HIS COLLEAGUE IN COSTA RICA OF HAVING TO USSUE WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS A STUPIDITY (UNA PENDEJADA). THE GENERAL ALSO WENT ON TO CHARACTERIZE TODAY'S GOH MEETING WITH KIRCHOFF

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(STANDARD) AND BLACK (UNITED) AS INTERESTING BUT

UNPRODUCTIVE. HE SAID THE TALKS HAD TO BE SUSPENDED BECAUSE TOWARD THE END OF THE DAY GOH OFFICIALS HAD BEEN RELEGATED TO ROLE OF REFEREES OR MODERATORS BECAUSE THE TWO FRUIT COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES BECAME ENGAGED IN HEATED ARGUMENTS. AFTER I PERSISTED, MINECON BENNATON WHO WAS STANDING NEXT TO THE GENERAL, ASSURED ME THAT THERE WOULD DEFINITELY BE A CONTINUATION OF THE TALKS. (BENNATON HAS INFORMED ANOTHER EMBASSY SOURCE THAT HE FOUND THE TALKS ENCOURAGING.)

2. THE GENERAL ALSO TOLD ME THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH ODUBER ON JUNE 4 AND THAT LATTER HAD INDICATED HE HAD SECURED PROMISE OF VENEZUELAN MONEY TO BUY OUT STANDARD IN COSTA RICA. LOPEZ HAD FIRM IMPRESSION THAT ODUBER PLANNED TO DO JUST THAT. I EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THIS CONCLUSION, SAYING OUR REPORTS INDICATED CAUTION ON PART OF COSTA RICAN GOVERNMENT. LOPEZ SAID HE HOPED THIS WAS THE CASE, AS IT WOULD BE RUINOUS FOR COSTA RICA TO ENTER THE BANANA BUSINESS.

3. LOCAL PRESS AND OFFICIAL REACTION TO THE ALLEGED STANDARD FRUIT ASSASSINATION PLOT CONTINUES TO BE MILD AND SKEPTICAL. LA NOTICIA OF JUNE 5 CARRIED AN EDITORIAL COMMENTING ON THE "INVENTION OF A PLOT" AND CALLED SUCH ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTIC OF TORRIJOS' EFFORTS TO GIVE HIMSELF THE IMAGE OF A REVOLUTIONARY STRONGMAN FACING SERIOUS OPPOSITION. THE SAME EDITION CARRIED A FRONT PAGE HEADLINED ARTICLE QUOTING FONMIN BATRES AS SAYING THAT CALM REIGNED IN THE GOH AND THAT FURTHERMORE, THE CHARGES APPEARED TO BE PURE SPECULATION DESIGNED TO AGGRAVATE CURRENT PROBLEMS. TIEMPO OF JUNE 6 PUBLISHED VERBATIM SPANISH TRANSLATION OF DENIAL MADE BY CASTLE AND COOK PRESIDENT KIRCHOFF. GENERAL LOPEZ IN JUNE 6 INTERVIEW IN NOTICIA, DISMISSED STORY BY SARCASTICALLY ASKING WHO WAS AROUND TO CARRY OUT A GOLPE AGAINST GOH.

4. COMMENT: FROM PRESS COMMENT AND PUBLISHED REMARKS OF GOH OFFICIALS IT IS THUS APPARENT TO PUBLIC THAT CHARGES ARE NOT BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY.
SANCHEZ

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